



Call for Paper

ESA2011-RN/RS-1151

RN31 - Ethnic Relations, Racism And Antisemitism

V. Altglas^{1,*}

¹School of Policy, Social Policy and Social Work, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST, Belfast, United Kingdom

Description of the Research network: The perspective of this network is to expand sociological research on racism by bridging the divide between ethnic relations, racism and anti-Semitism, in the sense of exploring their correspondences, contiguities and contrasts.

General call for paper: The 10th Conference of the European Sociological Association will be held in Geneva 7th-10th September 2011 on the topic "Social Relations in Turbulent Times" (<http://esa10thconference.com/>)

The ESA Network on Ethnic Relations, Racism and Antisemitism invites submissions of papers. Our sessions will, broadly speaking, attempt to contribute to the questions raised by this general theme. We will also hold sessions that focus on methods and methodology for researching the fields of racism and antisemitism.

Indeed, during the Lisbon ESA Conference and Belfast meeting we stressed the need to start a common reflection on methodologies and techniques to research in the field of racism, anti-Semitism and race relations. Even though theoretical reflection on these topics has reached a high level of common scientific understanding methodologies used for research are often still unclear, naive, or even nonexistent.

As suggested by Bulmer and Solomos, a roomy theoretical debate does not match an equally extensive discussion upon methodology. This situation is also surprising given the high politicization and deep controversies that have arisen in recent years on these topics (M. Bulmer and J. Solomos, *Researching Race and Racism*, Routledge, Milton Park, 2004). But perhaps it is precisely because of this widespread politicization of research on racism, antisemitism, and Islamophobia that methodological problems have been kept at a distance.

When we look for an explanation of the social realm, in particular for a sensitive topic such as racism, it is important to make clear our research design and why we have chosen those methodologies for gathering experiences and data. In fact, only by this reflexivity can we better understand both the logic of research construction and the interpretation of data.

It is not always easy to translate the theoretical categories in research tools, as is often surprisingly difficult to operationalize the concepts to collect empirical data to identify the how, where, when, and who of racism. These notes are intended to suggest some paths for reflection on these issues, while avoiding taking a stance of obsessive concern with method. It is not our intention to open a chapter on the neutrality of research, because this has never existed in absolute terms. We just mean that when we do research we should adopt

criticism and self-reflection on both our work and on that of others. We must use a constructive scepticism, using the rule of doubt, even where consistency, links, and explanations are very clear.

The disciplines involved in who could take care to study racism, antisemitism, prejudice, xenophobia, discrimination, and race relations are manifold. Sociology and anthropology, which first engaged on these issues, have been added to over time by disciplines such as history, psychology, semiotics, political science, statistics, geography, and philosophy. Each of these disciplines uses its specific tools of analysis and research, developed in the course of an internal and long series of adjustments, comparisons and reflections. They should guide us in doing research or still suggest a more careful attention of how the data were collected, analyzed, interpreted and presented. We are more concerned to identify the phenomenal field to be investigated and from which to take the information than a strict division of methods based on these disciplines.

This is essentially an initial conversation that aims to bring together and to solicit members of the RN to consider the problems arising from doing research. We invite all of you who are engaged in this kind of research and scholarship to submit papers to the Research Network to share ideas, experiences and findings.

Abstract submission will be open on Monday, 10th January 2011 on www.esa10thconference.com and will be closed on Sunday, **25th February 2011**. Please share this call with colleagues of yours who might be interested in contributing.

Network Coordinators: Véronique Altglas: v.altglas@qub.ac.uk
And Robert Fine: d.hirsh@gold.ac.uk